

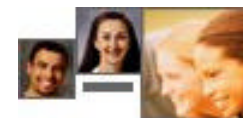


# Become A Mentor





## Learn to Mentor



Hi and welcome  
to  
The National  
Mentoring  
Partnership's  
Learn to Mentor  
Training.

As you explore,  
you'll begin to  
build  
relationships with  
the people you  
meet.



*Course Introduction* ●

*Mentoring: An Orientation* ●

*The Mentoring Lifecycle* ●

*Next Steps* ●

*Check Your Knowledge* ●

*Ask an Expert* ●

**"Mentoring** is so important to **success** because  
it can broaden your horizons and introduce you to a **new world**."

Jackie Joyner-Kersey, Olympic Medalist



## Welcome!

So you are interested in becoming a mentor. That's great! Mentoring will give you one of the most satisfying and rewarding experiences you've ever had.

Whether you are participating in an established mentoring program, or considering becoming a mentor on your own, you may be feeling a little nervous at this point. People considering mentoring often wonder what it's all about.

This course is designed to give you all the information and tools you will need to become a great mentor. In this section of the course, you will learn:

- Why people become mentors
- The benefits of becoming a mentor
- What is covered in this course
- Remember, mentoring is really a lot of fun - so have a good time while you take this course and prepare yourself to be a great mentor!



• **Note:** This course is designed primarily for adults mentoring middle school-age or high school-age young people. If your mentee is younger than middle school-age, some of the course content may require modification to work for you. As you go through the course, remember to think about whether specific suggestions or concepts are age-appropriate for your mentee. Additional resources may also help.



## Why Do People Become Mentors?

By deciding to become a mentor, you have put yourself in some pretty good company! Why do people choose to become mentors?

There are probably as many reasons for people becoming mentors as there are mentors!



Susan



Byron



Will



Maria



### **Susan**

After I graduated from college and left home, my mom began mentoring a young girl who lived nearby. During the first year they were together, Mom often told me about how things were going. They had a really great relationship. One day, when I was visiting home, I had a chance to meet Felicia, Mom's mentee. They seemed really comfortable together. When we were alone, Felicia told me how much Mom had done for her and how much the relationship meant to her. Last year, Mom died. A month or two later, I decided to call Felicia to see if she wanted me to be her mentor. She said yes! We've been working together for six months now. It was a little hard at first, because we both missed my mom so much. But things are working out. And Felicia is just awesome! She is very determined and has this great, positive outlook on life. I can see why Mom was so into being a mentor.

### **Byron**

When I was in high school, I was really into basketball. And I was good -- probably the best on our team. My future was clear, I was headed for the NBA. I didn't spend too much time on school work because I thought it really wouldn't matter. One of my teachers showed me that without better grades, I'd never make it to college. She did a lot to help me through school. I went to college on a basketball scholarship. My first year, I injured my knee and couldn't play anymore. My coach spent a lot of time with me, helping me make new plans. Thanks to a lot of help, I graduated. Now I'm an assistant basketball coach at a college. I spend a lot of time with the kids on my team helping them realize that athletics are great, but they aren't everything. I also work as a mentor to two high school kids. I hope I can help them out the way other people helped me.



### **Will**

I never signed up to be a mentor, it just sort of happened. I grew up in a pretty tough neighborhood. I got into my share of trouble, but I finally did graduate from high school. I'm working now and have my own place, not too far from where I used to live. Every day, when I walked from the bus to my apartment, I had to go around and through a group of kids who hung out on the street. After doing this for several weeks, one day I decided to stop and talk with them. Before I knew it, I'd developed a real bond with three of the kids.

Now we see each other almost every week. I've brought them to the community pool and played with them at the recreation center. We even took a trip to an amusement park. Last summer I helped them all get jobs- at the YMCA, a restaurant and a local fast food place.

It's funny, I never planned on any of this, but mentoring has definitely been the most rewarding thing I've ever done!

### **Maria**

I grew up lucky. My folks both lived at home. Both of them had pretty good jobs. I did well in school. I got a scholarship that helped me get through college. I graduated with a degree in Business. Now, I have my own business and I'm doing pretty well.

I look around and see a lot of kids who aren't as lucky as I was. Their parents don't live together. Their families don't have much money. And sometimes it seems like growing up now is just harder than it was when I did it.

I want to give back to my community. I've always liked working with kids. Being a mentor is a way for me to do both at the same time. I spend a lot of time with my mentee showing her how she can make it, too.



## **Giving Back And Contributing To The Future**

Mentoring a young person provides him/her with a wealth of benefits. From improved grades to an enhanced self image, the research shows mentoring helps young people.

However, mentoring provides significant benefits to mentors as well.

Experienced mentors report that they actually feel like they get more out of their mentoring relationship than they give!

While the benefits of mentoring are as diverse as the people who mentor, here are some themes we hear again and again. As a mentor, you will be:

- Making a difference in someone else's life
- Learning about yourself
- Giving Back
- Having fun





### **Making A Difference In Someone Else's Life**

When you mentor a young person, you have a chance to have a positive effect on the course of his or her life. Most people who have ever made something of themselves had an adult who believed in and encouraged them when they were young - it made a real difference. *You can be that person.*

### **Learning About Yourself**

The mentoring relationship doesn't just affect the mentee! As you and your young friend talk, explore values and interests and goals, you will learn more not only about him or her but also about yourself. How often do we take time to have these types of talks with our friends, colleagues or ourselves? *It's a shared opportunity for learning and growth.*

### **Giving Back And Contributing To The Future**

Most of us can remember the teacher, coach, neighbor or other adult who believed in us and helped us believe in ourselves. Many mentors see mentoring as a way of repaying that debt - and also as a way of making the community, nation and even world a better place, one future citizen at a time.

### **Having Fun**

Going places together, reading, learning, doing activities - from making art to hiking a mountain - are all opportunities to learn and build your relationship. They are also fun. Most of us could use a little more fun in our lives - and having fun while doing something worthwhile is a double win.



## **Mentoring: An Orientation**

Few bonds in life are more influential than those between a young person and an adult. Mentors are adults who, along with parents, provide young people with support, counsel, friendship, reinforcement and constructive example.

Since mentoring is so important to young people, most adults want to know the basics before they are matched with a child. Typically they want to know - "What is a mentor?" "What is expected of me?"

"Am I really up for the job?"

This lesson will put any worries to rest by giving you a chance to take stock of what you already know about mentoring and by teaching you more about what a mentor is.

- What is Mentoring?
- Personal Reflection
- Qualities of Successful Mentors
- Your Role As A Mentor
- The Role of Parents
- What Young People Want in a Mentor
- Tips for Success
- Common Concerns
- Can You Commit?





## What is Mentoring?

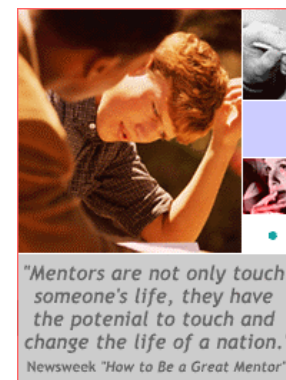
A mentor is an adult who, along with parents, provides young people with support, counsel, friendship, reinforcement and a constructive example. Mentors are good listeners, people who care, people who want to help young people bring out strengths that are already there.

A mentoring relationship can take many forms. In the best relationships, the adult helps the youth define and achieve his/her goals.

As a mentor, you might help your mentee:

- Plan a project for school
- Explore a topic of mutual interest
- Visit some of the exciting places where you live
- Set some career goals and start taking steps to make them happen
- Learn more about the community and how to help others through volunteering
- Strengthen communication skills and ability to relate well to all kinds of people
- Make healthy choices about day-to-day life, from food to exercise and beyond

**The list is almost endless!**



## Personal Reflection

Before we move on to talking about your future as a mentor, let's take a minute to reflect on your past.

We've already mentioned the Tool Kit, and we're assuming you've got your copy sitting next to you, along with a pen or pencil. Please turn to page 2 of the toolkit and complete the exercise.



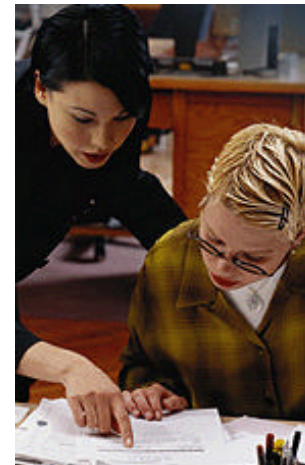


## Qualities of Successful Mentors

It is important to understand that you don't have to be brilliant or perfect to be a good mentor! If you want to be a mentor, and care enough to do it right, here is what we know about successful mentors. While the specifics of each mentoring relationship may vary, the qualities of an effective mentor remain the same.

Click each of these links to learn more about the qualities of successful mentors.

- Have a sincere desire to be involved with a young person
- Respect young people
- Actively listen
- Empathize
- See solutions and opportunities
- Are flexible and open





### **A Sincere Desire To Be Involved With A Young Person**

Mentors have a genuine desire to be part of other people's lives, to help them pursue their interests, achieve their goals, and handle tough decisions. They have to be invested in the mentoring long enough to make a difference.

### **Respect For Young People**

Mentors should not have preconceived notions that youth need to be "rescued". Mentors who convey a sense of respect and equal dignity in the relationship win the trust of their partners, and the privilege of being advisors to them.

### **An Ability To Listen Actively**

It is relatively easy to give advice or express opinions. It's much harder to find someone who will suspend his or her own judgment and really listen. Mentors often help simply by listening, asking thoughtful questions, and giving participants an opportunity to explore their own thoughts with a minimum of interference. When people feel accepted, they are more likely to ask for and respond to good ideas.

### **Empathize**

Empathy is the ability to understand, at a very deep level, what another person is going through- even without having had the same life experiences. It is very different from sympathy, which is sharing sad feelings.

Of course you won't always understand completely what your mentee is going through - that's natural. The ability to empathize and the willingness to try to understand are the keys. Effective mentors empathize effectively- they can understand what a mentee is going through, without becoming caught up in the problem themselves.

### **See Solutions And Opportunities**

Good mentors balance a realistic respect for the real and serious problems faced by their mentees with optimism about finding equally realistic solutions. They are able to make sense of a seeming jumble of issues and point out sensible alternatives.

### **Flexibility And Openness**

Good mentors recognize that relationships take time to develop and that communication is a two-way street. They are willing to take time to get to know their mentees, to learn new things that are important to their partners (music, styles, and philosophies), and even to be changed by their relationship.

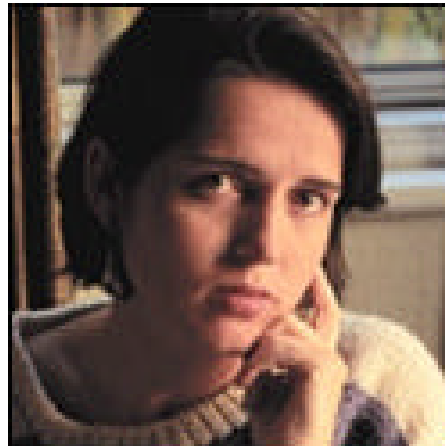


## **Your Role As A Mentor**

You may be wondering what role you should play as a mentor. Defining roles can be challenging, so let's start with something you are probably already familiar with.

Most of us have had a supervisor - a boss - at some time in our lives. Let's think first about the job of a supervisor.....

Please turn to your toolkit, page 3, and complete the exercise.





## Your Role As A Mentor

Supervisors are called on to wear many 'hats,' among them:

- Delegater
- Role model
- Cheerleader
- Coach
- Enforcer of policies
- Spokesperson to senior management
- Liaison between staff and organization

Just as a supervisors wears many 'hats,' so do mentors. Here are some of the roles a mentor does, and does not play.

A Mentor is A	A Mentor is not A
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Friend</li> <li>•Coach</li> <li>•Motivator</li> <li>•Companion</li> <li>•Supporter</li> <li>•Advisor</li> <li>•Advocate</li> <li>•Role Model</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•An ATM</li> <li>•Social worker</li> <li>•Parent</li> <li>•Cool peer</li> <li>•Nag</li> <li>•Parole officer</li> <li>•Savior</li> <li>•Baby-sitter</li> </ul>

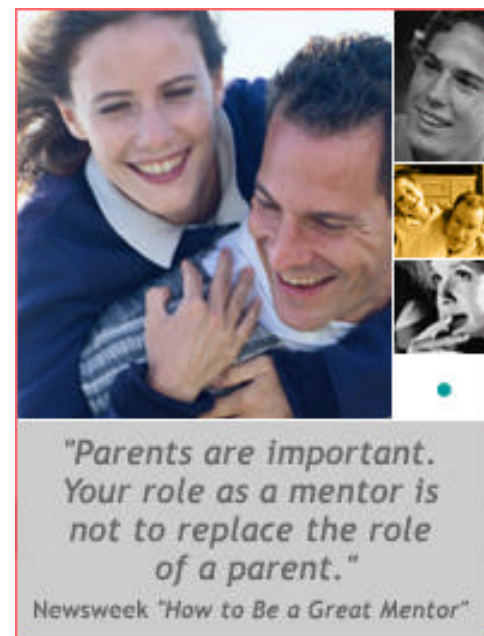


## The Role of Parents

Parents play an important role in the mentoring relationship.

If you are participating in an established mentoring program, and especially if you are mentoring independently, it is important to meet your mentee's parents. Their support of your relationship with their child will help you be a more effective mentor.

Mentors and parents each have specific roles to play. Take a moment to do the exercise on page 4 of your toolkit. By doing this activity you will get crystal clear on how your role relates to that of your mentee's parents. When you are finished, [click here](#).





## Mentor/Parent Roles

Although your role as a mentor may occasionally overlap with that of a parent, it's important to remember that these are two distinct roles. You are involved so that your mentee can have another caring adult in his or her life - not to supersede parents, or imply by your involvement that they're not doing their jobs.

The best way to add value to your young person's life is to be another adult who cares and plays certain key roles, like adviser and coach. Trying to act as a father or mother - to discipline, make life decisions for a child - is a sure route to doing more harm than good. Remember that even with two great parents it still takes a village to raise a child - and as a mentor you are an important member of that village.

Role	Mentor	Parent
Confidant	X	X
Advisor	X	X
Disciplinarian		X
Teacher	X	X
Friend	X	X
Decision Maker		X



## What Young People Want From A Mentor

When asked, young people invariably say that they want a mentor to help in three key areas:

- Advice
- Access
- Advocacy

Be sure to talk with your mentee to find out what he/she wants from you.





## **Advice**

As a mentor, you bring a wide range of life experiences to the relationship. As a result, you can be a great source of advice and information. From time to time your mentee may need a second opinion, or a different perspective that you can provide. Help your mentee gain a new perspective by sharing your experiences. What did you do in a similar situation? How did it work out? Be willing to share, but check to make sure your mentee is interested first!

Remember that you and your mentee are different people. Your mentee will have his/her own values, which may be very different from yours and may lead them to very different ideas about what to do. Your role is to offer insight, advice and suggestions. It is your mentee's role to evaluate the options, consider what you have said, and then make the best decision.

## **Access**

One of the most valuable things you can do for your mentee is to help open doors. That's what access is all about -- helping your mentee find and get involved in new situations.

You can help your mentee find people, opportunities and information that he/she might not have found on his/her own. You can take your mentee to new places, introduce them to new people and help him/her learn about resources that will help reach his/her goals.

Improved access to resources is one of the most valuable benefits you can give to your mentee!

## **Advocacy**

Have you ever had someone stand up for you when you needed it? Or speak on your behalf? That's what advocacy is all about.

If your mentee needs a job reference or a college recommendation, you can be a big help!

But remember -- in order to be an effective advocate, you have to really get to know your mentee. You will have to create opportunities to get to know your mentee as a person. The more you learn about your mentee, the stronger an advocate you can be!

## Tips For Success

Now that you know what is expected of you, here are some Do's and Don'ts that you should remember.



- Appreciate any signs of growth
- Listen carefully to what your mentee says
- Ask good questions
- Share your thoughts and feelings with your mentee
- Remember to be on time
- Try your best to be a good role model
- Learn any special rules that are part of your program
- Be interested in your mentee
- Show that you recognize the mentee's values and lifestyle
- Strive for mutual respect
- Be honest



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## Common Concerns

Still have some concerns about becoming a mentor? Lots of very successful mentors had concerns before they got started, too! We have compiled a list of the most common concerns and asked experienced mentors how they would respond to them.

What if ...

... my help isn't wanted?

... something really serious comes up?

... I'm too different to relate well?

... for some reason I can't mentor anymore?

... I do something wrong?

... the person I mentor is a disappointment?





### **What if my help isn't wanted?**

It's not easy to trust a stranger, especially if you're a young person who's had a lot of bad experiences with adults in the past. It may take a whole lot to build up trust. Don't interpret caution as a rejection. A young person may not show it -- in fact, he or she may not even know it fully -- but your help is definitely wanted.

### **What if something really serious comes up?**

While most mentoring relationships develop and flourish without serious problems, things do happen. Mentors have an important role, but that role does not include medical or psychological treatment, or family counseling. There are support systems in place for real emergencies. The most a mentor is expected to do -- and should do -- is to help guide a young person to the appropriate source of professional help.

### **What if I'm too different to relate well?**

Many first-time volunteers worry that differences in age, race, religion, education, or gender will be insurmountable barriers. Actually, most experienced mentors report that mentoring a young person from a different background broadened their own horizons and deepened their understanding of other people and cultures.

### **What if for some reason I can't mentor anymore?**

This is a very serious concern. Mentoring is a deep commitment. It will do far more harm than good to enter a young person's life, build up trust, and then abandon the relationship. Be as honest as possible with yourself when committing to be a mentor -- for everyone's sake. If you aren't sure about in-depth mentoring, try one of the many shorter-term alternatives, such as tutoring, or one-time projects.

### **What if I do something wrong?**

If you are there for your young friend no matter what; if you listen and really hear what's being said; and if you do your best to counsel and not to judge, you will have done everything right. Some young people are readier than others for a mentor. Some may test a mentor's commitment. Try not to take such behavior personally. Just keep trying your best and keep doing the right things. Gauge your success by your actions, not your mentee's.

### **What if the person I mentor is a disappointment?**

A better question is, "What encouragement can I give if my mentee disappoints himself or herself?" Mentors are in the business of helping young people achieve their fullest potential. You can be sure that mistakes will be made. You won't be able to help a young person learn from a mistake if you can't handle it yourself.



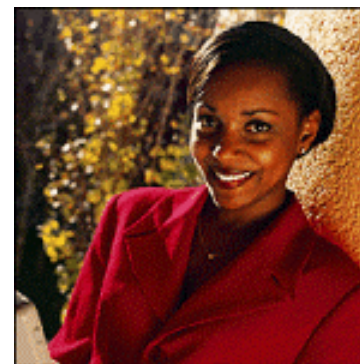
## **Can You Commit?**

You now have a good idea of the qualities and characteristics required to be a great mentor. The final ingredient is commitment.

As we have discussed, there are significant considerations in developing a mentoring relationship. Helping a youth develop and grow brings tremendous rewards, but it doesn't happen overnight.

Before you decide to pursue a mentoring relationship, you should ensure that you can commit at least six months to the relationship. How often you meet with your mentee varies from program to program and pair to pair: once every week or biweekly is not uncommon. Be sure to find out about any program requirements and explore your and your mentee's preferred schedule.

Are you participating in a formal mentoring program?





## **Are You Participating In A Formal Mentoring Program?**

You may be getting involved as a mentor through a formal program - perhaps through a nonprofit organization that serves young people, or a school, or community of faith. If you are involved in a formal program, please remember that it's very important to work closely with their staff throughout your mentoring experience. Mentoring programs offer you many benefits: their staff members have lots of experience working with young people and adult mentors, and they have tools and advice and training to help you be successful.

Sometimes programs might seem to have a lot of "red tape" or hoops for you to jump through, but remember - these processes actually are designed to help ensure a good, successful mentoring relationship, not to slow you down or make things difficult. Please keep this in mind: a great partnership with a formal program can help ensure success for you and your mentee.

Note: if the program you're involved with requires you to interact with your mentee only in one specified place, like your workplace or your mentee's school, some of the suggestions in this course and in the Toolkit won't fit your situation. For example, you won't need to pick a place for your first meeting! When in doubt, please show an activity or lesson to the staff person who you're working with for ideas on how to use (or not) any portion of this course.



## Wrap Up

Terrific! You've finished this lesson on the roles and responsibilities associated with mentoring!

You have learned:

- What mentoring is
- What qualities help create a strong mentoring relationship
- What role you should play as a mentor
- What role parents should play
- What your mentee wants from you
- What time commitment is required for success





## **The Mentoring Lifecycle: It's The BEST!**

Mentoring relationships have ups and downs and go through certain phases. Learning about these phases will help you feel more comfortable since you will know what to expect. You will also be more supportive of your mentee. This lesson will help you understand each phase of the mentoring relationship.

In addition, you will find out what to do during each phase to make sure your relationship is great!

Most mentoring relationships go through four stages:

- Birth
- Engage
- Sustain
- Transition

You can easily remember this by remembering that mentoring relationships are the BEST!

Remember that these stages are not clear-cut. They frequently overlap, and you may even find yourself returning to an earlier phase. This is all part of the normal development of the relationship.

Click each of these links to learn more about each phase of a mentoring relationship. When you reach the end of each phase, you will return to this screen. You can then choose another phase.





## Birth

The birth of your mentoring relationship is where it all begins!

During this phase, you will experience one of the most exciting events in the relationship - meeting your mentee for the first time.

You will also talk with your mentee to find out what each of you is expecting from the relationship.

Let's take a look at what you can do to make sure your first few meetings go well.



*"Mentors are not only touch someone's life, they have the potential to touch and change the life of a nation."*

Newsweek "How to Be a Great Mentor"



## **Engage**

Once your mentoring relationship is off to a good start, you and your mentee enter the second phase: engage.

From the outset you have worked on getting to know one another while at the same time planning specific activities and goals for the mentorship. This is sometimes called paying attention to "task" - the things you and your mentee want to do and accomplish; and to "relationship" - building a solid connection between you.



In the Engage phase, you will deepen and strengthen your relationship, developing greater mutual trust and respect. At the same time, you will be further defining tasks - defining goals and making plans for activities that will help meet your mentee's goals.



## **Sustain**

The next stage of your relationship will likely be the longest as you Sustain your mentoring relationship. During this stage you will continue to help your mentee reach his/her goals.

You will both need some new skills to keep your relationship strong over the long term. These include:

1. Assessing the health of your relationship
2. Giving feedback
3. Solving problems
4. Determining if you are really making a difference

These four skills will be discussed next.



## Transition

The fourth phase in a mentoring relationship is the Transition Phase.

Some mentoring relationships do come to an end, often at the end of an agreed upon time. However, many mentors and mentees choose to stay in touch years after their formal interaction ends. We're going to talk about the ways your mentoring relationship may end or change in this section, and help you feel good about how that can happen.

Keep in mind, though, that there's another way that mentoring is an ongoing cycle without an end: when a mentee grows up and decides to become a mentor to a young person, the cycle of giving - you might call it a 'virtuous cycle' - continues.





## **Transitions, Not Endings**

So we know that a transition isn't necessarily a moment for "The End" to flash on the screen - but how does a successful mentoring relationship close out the formal mentor-mentee connection in a healthy, positive way?



There are two main ways a mentoring relationship comes to a formal end: when it is initiated by mentor or mentee; or when the goals of the mentorship are achieved and the agreed upon time commitment has been honored. Before we talk about these two types of endings, keep in mind that it's a good idea not to wait until your last meeting with your mentee to start talking about transitions - transitioning takes time, so be sure to begin exploring the topic long before the likely end point. Let's look at each of the ways a mentoring relationship typically ends.

## Ending "On Time and On Purpose"

When a mentee has reached his or her mentoring-related goals and the time both people have committed has ended, it is time to come to closure on your formal relationship. Remember this does not mean "this is goodbye - sob!" - you can and should talk together about whether you would like to remain in touch - and if so, how.

Here are some tips that might help:

- Renegotiate Ground Rules
- Celebrate Your Successes
- Consider a Ritual "Rite of Passage"





## **Renegotiate Ground Rules**

It's a good idea to set realistic expectations for your ongoing connection and reach a new agreement on how this more informal relationship can work for both of you. Start by revisiting your ground rules and adjust them as necessary.

## **Celebrate Your Successes**

Don't forget to talk together about your mentorship and what your mentee has accomplished. You will almost always have a lot to celebrate. Reminiscing about the times you've spent together - fun you've had, activity disasters, moments that were rough and others that were sweet - can feel great for both of you.

## **"Rite of Passage"**

Human beings are natural makers of ritual. Find a human culture anywhere on the planet, and you'll find rituals created to mark major life passages. Concluding a successful mentoring relationship is the kind of significant life event that deserves a ritual; since we don't have one that is universal in this culture, dream one up between you. Some ideas might include:

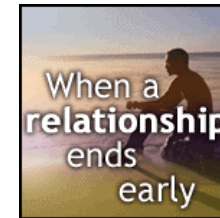
- A special meal together where you look over photos or other materials you've created.
- A 'graduation ceremony' where you and your mentee make short remarks to each other about what the relationship has meant to you (consider inviting parents, important people in your life, a treasured teacher or coach).
- Something uniquely "you" that you two dream up together.



## When The Relationship Ends Early

Sometimes - despite everyone's best efforts - a mentoring relationship comes to an early conclusion. Common reasons for this to occur include:

- Mentor or mentee moves out of the area
- Other major life changes (health concerns, major career shifts) make continuing impossible
- One of the pair decides to end the relationship



If the relationship ends because of an unavoidable circumstance, consider taking the time to get closure between you and celebrate what you have accomplished. It is helpful to acknowledge that there is probably some disappointment on both your parts; make sure your mentee knows that this is not a reflection on him/her or how much you care.

If one or both of you truly feels it would be best to end the relationship, then your goal should be to make the ending positive and affirming for you both. Ask your mentee for a last meeting to talk about the ending and say good bye. At that meeting, remember to:

- Emphasize what has gone well - ways you've seen your mentee grow, and ways you've benefited
- Acknowledge that sometimes relationships are challenging, and you hope you've both gained some skills in working on interpersonal issues
- Reaffirm your faith in the young person's abilities and potential
- Encourage him or her to keep reaching out to others who can make a positive difference in his or her life - and to give back of him/herself to others.

What to do after that last meeting?



## **After That Last Meeting**

After the meeting ends, remember to emphasize the positive in your own thoughts as well. You've taken the time and the risk to make a difference in a young person's life, and that is a great thing, something to be proud of. Even if you can't see any impact you have made at all (and this is unlikely), remember - sometimes the effect we have doesn't manifest itself for years. Some of the adults who changed your life probably never knew they did.

“Good communication is an important aspect of a healthy relationship.”



## Wrap Up

Transitions - or any change, for that matter - can be scary, but there are some things you can know about and do that ease the fears and make transitions go better.

In this module you've learned how to:

- Celebrate and mark the natural conclusion of a successful mentoring relationship
- Examine premature endings to ensure that alternatives have been explored
- Emphasize positive elements and ensure that even a premature ending affirms the young person and you

Thank you for taking the time and making the effort to really learn about how to be the best possible mentor you're capable of being.

Be sure to continue on to our "Next Steps" section!





## Wrap Up

Take a breather! You covered a lot of information in this lesson on the lifecycle of a mentoring relationship. You learned that: Take a breather! You covered a lot of information in this lesson on the lifecycle of a mentoring relationship. You learned that:

- During the Birth stage, you will meet your mentee and work on initial expectations.
- During the Engage stage, you will deepen your relationship and set up goals and objectives.
- During the Sustain stage, you will continue to meet and work towards your mentee's goals.
- During the Transition stage, you will move beyond your formal relationship.





## **Next Steps**

You have completed the instructional part of this course. We've covered a lot of material, and you should be ready to be a great mentor!

If you are already working with a mentoring program, your next step is to get in touch with your program and let them know that you have completed this course.

If you are not working with a program yet, this section will help you

- Ask questions to find the best match
- Be persistent!

Before you start contacting organizations, here are some tips to help you find the best match.





## **Pursue Several Options**

Contact at least three organizations. Investigate your options and choose the program that meets your needs.

- Ask to speak with the organization's volunteer coordinator.
- Tell the coordinator you are thinking about mentoring a young person -- or a group of young people -- and would like to know if their organization offers mentoring opportunities for adults.
- Describe the amount of time you have, the types of activities you are interested in, the number of children you would like to work with.
- Ask the coordinator about training and support for volunteers and about the application and screening process. The application process will probably include a written application, personal and professional references, a background check, and a personal interview.



- Ask Questions To Find The Best Match**

- Mentoring programs vary widely. To find one that really meets your needs, ask:
- What kind of training and support do you offer?
- How do you match young people with mentors?
- What happens if I need to stop mentoring?
- What different mentoring options does the program offer? (one-to-one mentoring, team mentoring, short-term mentoring, one-time projects, etc.)

- Be Persistent!**

- It may take awhile to be matched with a child. Application, screening, and training can take 1 - 6 months to complete. Mentoring programs are concerned with the well-being and safety of children and volunteers, and their selection and screening procedures reflect that concern.
- Please don't get discouraged if the first program you try does not match your needs. If that happens, ask to be referred to another organization. Becoming a mentor is well worth the effort, so keep trying!

## Self Check

Congratulations! You've covered a lot of material and have learned a lot about being a great mentor. Here is a chance for you to check how much you have learned during this course.

The following screens present a series of questions to help you check your knowledge. Each question will ask you about a specific mentoring incident. After you respond, you will have a chance to compare your response with an expert.





## Self Check Question #1

You've just been matched up with a mentee and are ready to meet in person! You just can't decide where to have your initial meeting. Which of the following places would you select for the setting of your initial meeting?

- 1 •Movie Theater
- 2 •Neighborhood Park
- 3 •Rock Concert
- 4 •Zoo

Select the answer that best reflects the choice you would make.  
Then click Next to find out what an Expert Mentor did in this situation.

### You selected the Movie Theater.

A movie sounds like fun, but it is not the best choice. You'll be too busy watching the movie to talk and get to know each other!

### You selected the neighborhood park.

While not a bad choice, the park is not your best choice for a first outing either. While the park would give you ample opportunity to talk, it would also leave you or you mentee feeling awkward and pressured to make conversation.

### You selected a rock concert.

While a rock concert sounds like great fun, it is not your best option. Have you ever tried to talk over guitar riffs and driving base?

### You selected the zoo.

The zoo is your best choice. While the zoo is entertaining ,it is also unstructured, making it easy for you and your mentee to walk and talk and get to know each other. Plus, there are plenty of sights and sounds to spark conversation when you run out of things to say.

## **Self Check Question #1 -> Expert Mentor Feedback**



"When I selected the site for my initial meeting with my current mentee, Kim, I chose the local zoo. I found the zoo to be entertaining. The zoo's unstructured nature provided ample time for conversation and provided a good opportunity to talk and get to know each other. The zoo also offered plenty of diversions that helped to spark our conversations. Neither of us felt pressured to force conversation.

I was able to find out from our initial conversations at the zoo that Kim loves dogs and hopes to be an animal trainer one day. We now center many of our activities together on animal training."



## Self Check Question #2

You've met with your mentee five times. He always seems shy and quiet. He hasn't seemed particularly interested in the activities that you've planned. You've inquired, but he never expresses to you what he would like to do instead. You don't want him to lose interest. You're trying to plan your next meeting, which of the following would you do?

- 1 •Pick another activity and hope he likes it.
- 2 •Force him to communicate with you and choose the next activity.
- 3 •Make a list together of the things you would like to do.
- 4 •End your relationship, it is obvious that you aren't making a difference.

Select the answer that best reflects the choice you would make. Then click the Next button to find out what an Expert Mentor did in this situation.

### You decided to select another activity yourself.

While not the worst choice, it's not your best choice either. If you continue picking activities and hoping for the best, you'll never draw out your mentee. Instead, keep trying to talk to him to find an interest that you share.

### You decided to force your mentee to choose an activity.

Your intentions are good, but let's work on your methods. You've already got a shy mentee, forcing him to make a choice will just scare him. Instead, keep trying to talk to him to find an interest that share.

### You decided to make a list together.

Awesome choice! This is a great activity to help you and your mentee get to know each other. And the list you create will make it easier for your mentee to choose activities on his own.

### You decided to end your relationship.

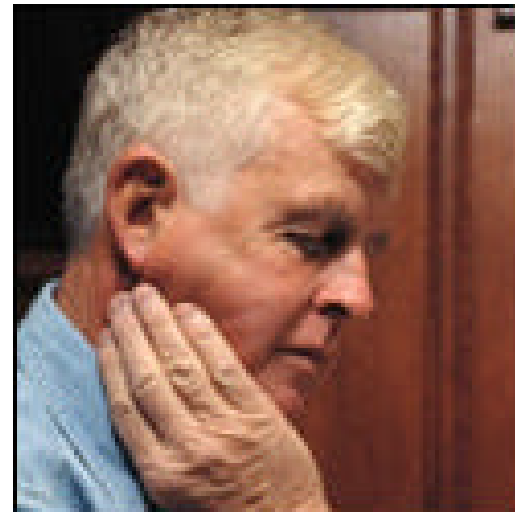
Don't give up so easy! Developing a strong mentoring relationship takes time. Instead, keep trying to talk to him to find an interest that you share.



## **Self Check Question #2 -> Expert Mentor Feedback**

I remember year's ago I had this mentee - his name was Jared - and he was slow to open up, too. So, I decided that we should come up with a list of ideas. It went slow at first. I named a few ideas to start out with. One of them involved fishing. It turns out that Jared LOVES fishing and got really excited about my idea! Once we opened that door, he came around and added some other ideas to the list. He actually planned our next outing together, a trip down the lure aisle at the local sports store.

Since Jared was already shy about expressing himself, I chose to take a passive approach that would allow him to learn how to open up. This activity gave Jared and myself a non-threatening opportunity to find things that we both have in common. We still had challenges ahead of us, but this was definitely the turning point in our relationship!"





### Self Check Question #3

On a few occasions you've asked your mentee if she had any specific goals. Each time she has replied, "Not really." She's not doing well in school and she does not play sports or participate in after school clubs or events. She talks about her future as if she does not see much opportunity. You should:

- 1 •Spend time with her doing things she likes to do, pointing out her gifts and discussing possible options for the future that use her gifts.
- 2 •Work with your mentee on a schedule for homework, and investigate other resources that may help.
- 3 •Tell her why she needs concrete goals and define what goals are best for her.
- 4 •Continue to ask her specific questions that may give you insight into what she really likes, and then make suggestions for goal-oriented activities.

Select the answer that best reflects the choice you would make. Then click the Next button to find out what an Expert Mentor did in this situation.

#### **You decided to work on your mentee's self esteem.**

Working on your mentee's self-esteem is a great place to start! It'll take time and support to help her change her negative self-image. Once she's feeling better about herself, don't forget to focus on her schoolwork, too!

#### **You decided to focus on academics.**

Helping her to focus on her schoolwork is a good choice but not the best. Your mentee seems to be lacking in self-esteem. Tackle her self-esteem first, and you may not even have to worry about the academics later!

#### **You decided to focus on goal setting.**

While goal setting is an important aspect of mentoring, it is not your place to dictate to your mentee what she should do with her life. Your mentee seems to have low self-esteem. Focus on building her up now and worry about setting goals later.

#### **You decided to discover the nature of your mentee's genius.**

Good choice! Questioning takes time and can be frustrating, but in the end it will be worth it. Once your outings become based on her interests, her self-esteem may improve and she'll most likely open up more and start suggesting other activities to do together.



**Self Check Question #3 -> Expert Mentor Feedback** "This situation reminds me of Letsy. She was just a lost soul when I met her, but I could see so much potential. First, I tried to build her self-esteem by focusing on her positive attributes, both physical and behavioral. I wanted to show Letsy just how many gifts she had to give. I kept my compliments specific; like, 'Your smile always makes me feel better.' Together we discussed how her gift for making people feel better is a building block for her future.

Next we focused on unearthing her interests. I kept asking her all kinds of questions and eventually I discovered Letsy's love of psychology. She really wanted to know what makes people tick. We designed activities around this interest and she later set a goal to become a psychologist - a perfect match with that feel better smile!

Now, we are focusing on getting her grades up so she can go to college to study psychology. We've set up a homework schedule and she enrolled herself in a tutoring program. She's now starting to make her own decisions and take responsibility for her grades. I think she might just make it!"





### Self Check Question #4

You and your mentee, Steve, have been matched for three months. Your relationship was slow to start, but you're really starting to click. He's been talking about computer-animated movies and video games a lot recently. You have yet to set a goal together. You're planning your next outing, which activity would you choose to encourage his interest and spark a goal?

- 1 •Buy and play the newest video game with him
- 2 •Offer to introduce him to your friend who's a graphic artist
- 3 •Go see the animated cartoon that was just released
- 4 •Go to the park and shoot hoops, as usual

Select the answer that best reflects the choice you would make.

Then click the Next button to continue.

**You decided to buy a video game.**

While a video game sounds fun, it's not your best choice. You'll probably be concentrating on trying to win rather than talking about the cool graphics. Why not take him to meet your friend who's a graphic artist instead?

**You decided to introduce him to the graphic artist.**

Fantastic activity! You'll feed his mind, spark his creativity, and teach valuable networking skills all in one afternoon. Then, if there's time you could go try out a game or two at the arcade-just for fun.

**You decided to take him to an animated movie.**

A computer-animated movie sounds fun, but it'll be hard to discuss the animation when everyone is "shhh"-ing you! Why not take him to meet your friend who's a graphic artist instead?

**You decided to shoot hoops.**

Playing basketball is fun, but will it encourage him to learn more about computer animation? Why not take him to meet your friend who's a graphic artist instead?



#### **Self Check Question #4 -> Expert Mentor Feedback**

When I first met my mentee Allison, she talked nonstop about wanting to be a movie star. We went to lots of films together and talked about which actors we liked and why; we also talked about the realities of show business and the tough odds for young people aspiring to stardom.

A few months into our relationship, I noticed that Allison was talking less about acting. She was involved with a theater production, but this time had volunteered to sew costumes. When Allison talked about creating the costumes, her face lit up. I mentioned that costume design might be a career option, and she seemed really interested.

We kept going to films - now we talked more about the clothes - but I also talked to a friend who is a fashion designer and through her met a costumer designer named Tony. Allison and I had lunch with Tony, and Allison asked him lots of great questions. Tony was so impressed with her interest that he offered Allison an internship next summer. She can hardly wait.





## Thanks!

We drew from many sources to develop the web-based training for mentors. Because of the extensive tradition of sharing among mentoring organizations, it is difficult to pinpoint original sources for all the materials. However, many elements are adapted directly from traditional mentoring training materials, including:

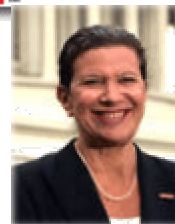
- *The Mentor Training Curriculum* by The National Mentoring Partnership and United Way of America
- *A Training Guide for Mentors* by Jay Smink
- *How To Be a Great Mentor* by Newsweek, Kaplan Educational Centers and The National Mentoring Partnership
- *Mentoring 101 ... The Mentee* by The Mass Mentoring Partnership

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Shayne Schneider



Dr. Susan Weinberger

**Congratulations,  
you have  
completed this  
training!**

